











Sherburne County's AIS Prevention Aid Program: A Snapshot of Accomplishments in 2020

Program Summary

The Sherburne County AIS Program strives to be an effective tool to education the public about AIS and greatly reduce the opportunity for new infestations to be introduced to Sherburne County waters. Despite the challenges we all faced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the AIS Prevention programs activities were able to be implemented. Below is a collection of accomplishments from the 2020 program.

Category	Metrics
 AIS Prevention Aid Used	\$ 58,302.81 AIS Prevention Aid used in calendar year 2020 \$ 2059.00 saved in a contingency fund
 People Doing AIS Work	<u>1</u> full-time staff with 20 % of their time dedicated to AIS work <u>1</u> part-time and seasonal staff with <u>5</u> % of their time dedicated to AIS work <u>9</u> Level 1 Watercraft Inspectors <u>0</u> Level 2 Watercraft Inspectors <u>29</u> % of aid used in 2020 for staff wages <u>57</u> volunteers conducting AIS work <u>158</u> volunteer hours served
 Partnerships	Organizations engaged and/or actively conducting aid-funded AIS work: <u>9</u> lake associations <u>1</u> conservation nonprofits and/or outdoor groups (angling, hunting, paddling, sailing, etc.) <u>1</u> schools and/or youth organizations <u>1</u> businesses <u>2</u> local governments Our county has an AIS Task Force or Committee: Yes
 Funds Distributed, Contributed and Leveraged	\$ 15,000 in grants awarded (aid to other organizations) <u>8</u> organizations awarded grants \$ 13,000 in funds contributed by other organizations to directly support aid-funded work <u>8</u> organizations contributing additional funds \$ 13,300 in other funds leveraged for Level 1 Inspections
 Communities Engaged	<u>3</u> events held about AIS or that included AIS topics <u>62</u> residents and visitors directly engaged about AIS during events <u>5</u> posts on social media seen by <u>633</u> followers <u>0</u> paid advertisements (billboards, TV, radio, newspaper, social media, etc.) <u>12</u> children taught about AIS
 Watercraft Inspected	<u>3,889</u> inspections performed <u>1,716</u> hours of inspections performed <u>9</u> accesses covered by inspectors <u>10</u> water bodies covered by inspectors <u>96</u> % of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out <u>0</u> decontamination units in operation <u>0*</u> boaters engaged by AIS Volunteers/Ambassadors at water accesses <i>*AIS Volunteer program not active in 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns</i>

Category	Metrics
 Law Enforcement Supported	\$ 4,200 provided to local law enforcement officers to enforce AIS laws 4 local law enforcement officers trained in 2020 on AIS laws 6 local law enforcement officers conducting AIS work 437 boaters contacted by local law enforcement
 Monitoring Conducted	18 total lakes and rivers surveyed for AIS. Surveys included: 4 early detection searches on 1 water bodies 34 zebra mussel settling plates deployed on 16 water bodies 48 veliger tows taken on 16 water bodies 7 aquatic plant surveys conducted on 7 water bodies 3 volunteers trained and/or active as AIS Detectors 18 people participated in the University of Minnesota Extension and AIS Research Center's "Starry Trek" event
 New Infestation Response Planning	6 new infestation response(s) coordinated Our county has a new infestation response plan: Yes
 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM)	\$ 4,000 of aid spent on IAPM 2 water bodies with aid-funded IAPM activities 2 groups involved or conducting aid-funded IAPM work \$ 9,903.01 in other funds leveraged for IAPM work (match for aid grants)

Program Spending Summary

Budget Category	AIS Prevention Aid Spent in 2020	Description
Public Outreach and Education	\$559.90*	Funds are used for supplies, print material expenses, workshop fees and other expenses related to outreach. *Budget not fully expended in 2020 due to COVID-19 related event cancellations
Local Grant Program	\$14,794.26	Provides grant aid for AIS planning, monitoring, management and volunteer engagement activities
Watercraft Inspection	\$15,276.00	Contracts for Level 1 Inspection services at high-use and high-risk public accesses. <i>An additional \$17,860 was leveraged from local partners to add more inspections</i>
Enforcement	\$4,202.30	Provides funding for County Sherriff Department staff to engage public and monitor for AIS laws.
Monitoring	\$1,835.34	Facilitates several programs which operate to monitor for potential new AIS infestations
New Infestation Response	\$1,963.76	AIS contingency fund which is used to assist local partners with new AIS infestations.
Invasive Aquatic Plant Management	\$n/a	This component is included in "Local Grant Program" above.
Administration	\$19,671.25	Funds for SWCD staff to carry out AIS Prevention Plan.

Success Stories

This was the first year of implementing the new Sherburne County 2020-2024 AIS Prevention Plan, drafted in 2019 with the Sherburne County AIS Task Force. Despite complications with COVID-19, we set new records in AIS prevention including:

- A new high of 3,889 Level 1 watercraft inspections completed.
- A new high of 1,716 hours of Level 1 inspection time.
- 18 volunteers (a record turnout) participating in the University of Minnesota Extension's "Starry Trek" AIS monitoring event (COVID-19 safety precautions were followed).
- 18 lakes / rivers surveyed for AIS.

Unfortunately, several new infestations were identified in Sherburne County in 2020 including Eurasian water milfoil, golden clam, zebra mussels and rusty crayfish. All instances were found to be in a relatively early stage of infestation. While these discoveries are unfortunate, we are pleased to see the early detection protocols and an educated public are meeting their intended goal – to identify potential infestations early on and allow for rapid management discussions to take place. A number of these new infestations have resulted in early management activities and several will result in continued monitoring.

The Sherburne SWCD and Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations continues to collaborate on topics related to AIS. Currently the team is reviewing early detection protocols and developing a visual-based AIS Early Detection and Rapid Response Plan. The document will serve as a template for all Sherburne County lake groups to customize and use. Additionally, the team collaborated on creation of an AIS Monitoring Kit. The kit includes a plastic carrying bin with a rope rake and 50ft of rope, AIS identification guide, identification materials such as hand lens and ruler, waterproof specimen bags, and instructions for use. Each COLA member organization received a monitoring kit and future education days are currently being planned.

Reports and Products

Several reports and products have been produced using AIS Prevention Aid in 2020:

- Lake Orono Point-Intercept Survey datasets (2)
- Thompson Lake Association Lake Vegetation Survey report
- Aquatic Plant Community of Briggs Lake: 2020 report
- AIS Task Force: 2020 AIS Prevention Activities Powerpoint
- AIS Monitoring kits (9)

Photo(s) of AIS Activities



Photo 1: Starry Trek volunteers gather equipment (photo by Sanford Smith)



Photo 2: Contents of AIS Monitoring Kit (photo by Sherburne SWCD)

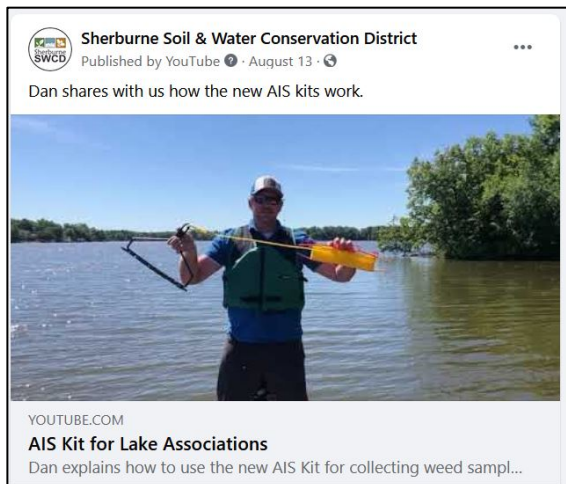


Photo 3: Educational YouTube video posted to Sherburne SWCD Facebook site

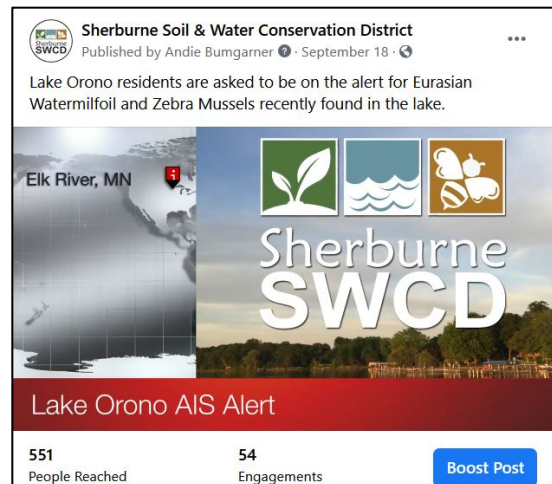


Photo 4: Educational YouTube video posted to Sherburne SWCD Facebook site



Photo 5: A 12-year old Starry Trek volunteer monitoring Briggs Lake for AIS (photo by Becky Guthrie)



Photo 6: Megan Weber, University of Minnesota, and Dan Cibulka (Sherburne SWCD) visit Briggs Lake to look for non-native golden clams (photo by Dan Cibulka, Sherburne SWCD)



Photo 7: Golden clams found in Briggs Lake by a 12-year old Starry Trek volunteer (photo by Megan Weber, University of Minnesota)



Photo 8: Lake Orono zebra mussel "hitching a ride" on a native mussel (photo by Dan Cibulka, Sherburne SWCD)